

## **Georgian Translations of Byzantine Hymnographers (7th-9th centuries)**

(Abstract)

Two redactions of Georgian Lenten Triodion compiled by the distinguished representatives of Georgian church and culture – Giorgi Athonite and Ephrem Mtsire (11<sup>th</sup> century) include variety of hymns translated from Greek which belong to the famous Byzantine hymnographers. Among them there are also such hymns of which nothing is known in today's scholarly literature. This paper deals with several hymns (hymnographical Canons and Stichera) of the following authors: Christophoros (9<sup>th</sup> century), Theophanos (9<sup>th</sup> century), Giorgi, Stephanus Sabbaites (8<sup>th</sup> century) and Sophronius of Jerusalem (7<sup>th</sup> century). Georgian translations give an opportunity of restoration or correction more than one specimen of Byzantine hymnography.

*Key words: Byzantine, Hymnography, Translations*

## **Georgian Translations of Byzantine Hymnographers (7th-9th centuries)**

Two redactions of Georgian Lenten Triodion compiled by the distinguished representatives of Georgian church and culture – Giorgi Athonite (Mtatsmindeli) and Ephrem Mtsire were discovered in Georgian manuscript - Georgica 5 stored at the National Library of France in Paris. The study of Georgica 5 has shown that it includes variety of hymns translated from Greek which belong to the famous Byzantine hymnographers. Among them there are also such hymns of which nothing is known in today's scholarly literature. In this paper we deal with several hymns of the following authors: Christophoros (9<sup>th</sup> century), Theophanos (9<sup>th</sup> century), Giorgi, Stephanus Sabbaites (8<sup>th</sup> century) and Sophronius of Jerusalem (7<sup>th</sup> century). We have not found their Greek originals in scholarly literature available for today.

Christophoros is less known Byzantine hymnographer. He lived and worked in Constantinople in the 9<sup>th</sup> century. In scholarly literature his hymnographic Canon referring to the fall of Adam is known. This hymn of Christophoros is included in the Greek and Slavonic publications of the Triodions. This Canon is written for the Apokreos week and it is created under the influence of Romanos Melodos's Kontakion created on the same theme. Georgian translation of this Canon of Christophoros was first found in the manuscripts Sin.5 (1052) and Sin.75 (11<sup>th</sup> century). In both of them the author of the hymn was named Stephanus: „ Fall of Adam. Author – Stephane. voice VIII. – Come wretched soul...” In Giorgi Athonite's autographic Triodion this Canon of Christophoros entered through the earlier Georgian translation which mainly coincides with the Greek text published for today. In Giorgi Athonite's Lenten Triodion as an author of the Canon is indicated “Christophoros”. Thus, Giorgi uses the earlier Georgian translation of the mentioned hymn but in accordance with Greek tradition, corrects the identity of its author. This obstacle evidences once more the accurateness characteristic to Giorgi Athonite in indication of the hymn writers.

The study of the manuscript Georgica 5 revealed the unknown Canon of Christophoros devoted to the Palm Week: “ voice III. – Opened thee, Word of Lord... “. The Canon is complete. It contains the second ode. An impressive description and analysis of the feast of Palm Sunday is given in it. In the scholarly literature known to us nothing is said about this Canon of Christophoros. Presumably Georgian translations appear to be the only source for restoration of this remarkable sample.

The manuscript Georgica 5 includes the Canon “Towards the tyrants and pursuers...” with the inscription of Giorgi's name. It is devoted to the commemoration of Theodore Tiron. The full text of the Canon is included in Triodions of both Giorgi Athonite's and Ephrem Mtsire's redactions. The author of the Canon – “Giorgi” is inscribed along the beginning of the hymn. In earlier Georgian manuscripts this Canon is not included. The mentioned hymn is not found in the publications of the Greek and Slavonic Triodions. In scholarly literature it is indicated that in Greek manuscripts of the 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> centuries several “Giorgi-s”

are found as the author of the hymns: the Metropolitan of Nikomedia (Νικόμηδος), Giorgi from the East (Ἰωάννης ὁ Ἰταλός), Giorgi of Sycilia, Giorgi of Sinai, Giorgi mentioned in Greek “Lives of Saints” (creator of the Canons) and one more Giorgi (Γιόργιος). Different number of hymns is ascribed to each of them. Due to the fact that creative works of these authors have not been studied so far, it is hard to say who must have been the author of the Kanon we are interested in. One thing is clear that Georgian translation of the mentioned Canon should be given special importance for future studies.

The name of the 9th-century Byzantine hymnographer, the Archdiocese of Nicaea -Theophanes, who was branded in the face with hot irons because of his denomination, is well-known to the proponents of the veneration of icons (Khachidze 2000: 142-143). He is a distinguished representative of Byzantine hymnography. Theophanes lived and worked in the 9<sup>th</sup> century in Jerusalem. All his life he energetically defended the veneration of images, for which he underwent an ordeal and consequently was exiled. The Eastern Orthodox Church venerated him as saint. The “Life” of Theophanes was written, and hymns devoted to him. Theophanes is a very productive author. Greek manuscripts have 162 Canons and around 29 small-sized hymns with his authorship. In Slavonic manuscripts his name is inscribed on 148 hymnographic Canons. The hymns of this author are distinguished by simplicity and lyricism. In the hymns of Theophanes Graptos the separate scenes from the Bible and books of Martyrs, well-known feasts are not only the subject of greatness. They are associated with the author’s personal emotions and mood. It seems that the author’s all spiritual life, his thoughts and feelings are linked only with the history of religion. Probably because of this he was called “sweet pipe” (Kalliste), i.e. the tool for expression of divinity. The translation of this author into Georgian language was started early. Georgian translations of his hymns were included into Sinai manuscripts as early as first half of the tenth century. Numerous Georgian translations of Theophanes’s hymns are found in Georgia, on Mount Athos, Black Mountain and Jerusalem in rewritten Georgian manuscripts. Theophanes’s hymns kept in Georgian “Menaia” are listed (Kvirikashvili 1982).

In Georgia 5 we have discovered Theophanes’s unknown hymn – “The Lament of the Virgin”. It is the lamentation of the Mother of God for her dead Son and it is intended for Holy Friday (Khachidze 2000: 140-159). This is a masterpiece of Christian poetry that is transmitted into Georgian language by adequate translation. The translation belongs to the great Georgian religious figure of the 11th century - Ephrem Mtsire. It is a classical translation which stands out by its artistic perfection.

Theophanes two Canons are included in the Triodion of Ephrem Mtsire’s redaction from the earlier redactions. The first of them is written for the first week of the Great Lent: “Voice III. – come, the believers, with joy..” It gives an opportunity to identify the author. The preciseness of indication to the author is evidenced by the original of Giorgi Athonite’s autographic Triodion stored in Paris where the author’s name is discerned – “Theophanes”. In Giorgi’s Triodion this Canon of Theophanes is included with earlier translation, the author – Theophanes is indicated already in the title attached to the hymn. In Sin.5 the hymn has the title which informs as to how the Empress Theodora restored icon veneration based on the Seventh Ecumenical Council after long-term persecutions by “godless” emperors. This Canon of Theophanes is included in the publications of Greek and Slavic Triodions. It is translated into Georgian without acrostics.

To the same author belongs the Canon for the second week in Ephrem Mtsire’s Triodion : “voice IV. – Glorious Lent...”. In Giorgi Mtatsmindeli’s autographic Triodion it is included in the composition of compilative Canon, the rest odes of which belong to Theodore Studites and Elias of Jerusalem. This hymn was first translated into Georgian by Giorgi Athonite.. This hymn of Theophanes Graptos is known in scholarly literature. It is also indicated that it had alphabetic acrostic and was devoted to the mentioning of the Prodigal Son. In the publications of Greek and Slavonic Triodions this Canon is not included. Thus, the Triodions of Giorgi Athonite and Ephrem Mtsire’s redactions follow old Greek tradition. Later tradition the existed publications of Greek “Lenten” based upon, do not know this Canon of Theophanes.

In the Triodion of Ephrem Mtsire’s redaction the full text an interesting small-size hymn translated from Greek is preserved – “voice VI. – Stadium of virtues... ” It is for Pancake week. It is inscribed at the beginning author- “Stephane”. There have been preserved scarce data about this interesting hymn-writer of the eighth century. His name is inscribed on several small-sized hymns in Greek and Slavonic manuscripts, and also Stichera devoted to the Prodigal Son. To him is also ascribed 4 „self - mode“ Stichera for the 5th Sunday of Great Lent (Karabinov 1910:120). Even

their trace has not been preserved in Greek and Slavonic manuscripts. Stephane's name is only found in "Hirmologions" in connection with one Canon for Triodion (Karabinov 1910: 121).

Thus, it can be said that only the name of this Byzantine hymnographer of the 8<sup>th</sup> century is mentioned in Greek and Slavonic manuscripts known for today.

Georgian manuscripts contain unique material for study of the creations of this important representative of Byzantine hymnography. This obstacle became obvious after reconstruction of the first Georgian Triodion and the revealing of Giorgi Athonite's autographic Triodion. The whole cycle of Stephanus Sabbaites hymns for Triodion appeared to be included in Georgian Triodions. They are 26 "Three-Odes" for the whole period of Great Lent – from I Monday including VI Friday. This cycle of Stephanes' hymns, as it turns out, was specially translated for the first Georgian Triodion the editor and compiler of which was the tenth-century great Georgian hymnographer Ioane Minckhi (Khachidze 2000:23). After Georgian Triodion – in Euthimius Athinite's redaction (manuscripts Sin.5 and Sin.75) this cycle of Stephane's "Three-odes" appeared to enter without inscription of the name (Khevsuriani 1982). Their revealing became possible only with the help of Giorgi Athinite's Triodion in which all these hymns of Stephane are included with indication to the authorship.

It is noteworthy that the whole cycle of Stephane's "Three-odes" in Giorgi Athinite's Triodion unlike the earlier translations seems to be corrected and bears the trace of editorial work. As is seen Giorgi is not totally satisfied with the earlier translation of Stephanes' hymns and corrects it in accordance with his contemporary Greek Triodions. In Ephrem Mtsire's Triodion one remarkable Stichera has the inscription of Stephanes's name that in the existing publications of Greek and Slavonic Triodions appeared to enter unsigned. Here it is divided into 2 one-trope hymn; here first comes the hymn substituting II Troparion: „Οἴμοι! ὁ Ἀδάμ ἐν

θρήνω...“ (Triodion 1879:107). „Самогласны. – Увы мне. Адам рыданием...“ (Slavonic Triodion

1975: 144). Then it is followed by the hymn composed of I Troparion: „Τὸ ♦♦ἀ□ιον ♦♦ὦν ἀρμ♦♦ὦν“ (Triodion 1879: 144 -145). The hymn is an eloquent testimony to artistic perfection of Stephanus Sabbaites' creative works. In the I troparion that represents an independent part of Stichera Lent is understood as self-sacrificing fight, "merit" that was characteristic to medieval religious and philosophical thinking and that appeared especially close for Georgian hagiographers or hymnographers. The author of the "Gobron's martyrdom" or the compiler of the first Georgian Triodion especially focuses his attention on the understanding of the battlefield as a sphere of activity for martyrs. In part II of the hymn - II troparion the focus of attention is placed on the exile of Adam because on that day this commemoration is established in Ephrem's Triodion. It is very likely that the translator perfectly manages to render the mood of Stephanus's hymn. This part of the hymn vividly testifies to the fact that its translator must have been the same person who managed to translate with rare artistic mastery Theophanes Graptos's "The Lament of the Virgin" for Great Friday.

On Palm Sunday in Triodion under Ephrem Mtsire's redaction there is Stichera "It's terrible to fall..." and there is an inscription of an author – Sophron". To this Sophronius, Patriarch of Jerusalem (634-644) is ascribed the cycle of small-sized hymns (Stichera) for the feast of the Nativity of Christ. This cycle of hymns stands out for great dramatization and artistic perfection. The language of the hymns is laconic and impressive. The Nativity hymns came down to us under the name of Sophronius are distinguished with archaism. Their dialogue character is also explained with it. According to a well-known researcher of Byzantine hymnography - E. Wellesz such kinds of hymns originate in Syrian poetry, namely, in one of the oldest type of hymn - soghita. The hymns came down to us under the name of Sophronius are considered as one of the oldest layers of Byzantine hymnography. Patriarch of Jerusalem Sophronius the Great was actually the author of some hymns the isolation and determination of which is extremely difficult today. Part of the manuscripts ascribes to it the authorship of "Great Friday Service" that is very significant literary monument. One part of the hymns entered this Service is found on the feasts of Nativity and baptism. Another part of the manuscripts consider Cyril of Jerusalem to be the author of this Service. In Georgian manuscripts his name is ascribed to small-sized hymn devoted Andrew the First-called.

The small- sized hymn signed with the name of Sophronius given in Georgian Triodions is not known in scholarly literature. This Stichera of Sophronius is followed by 3 small-sized hymns without indication to the authorship. Then follows Stichera with Kosma's autograph. It is difficult to say exactly but we can suppose

that the following 3 Stichera of the hymn inscribed with his name should also belong to Sophronius. The name of Sophronius is not found in the earlier Georgian Triodions. According to the materials revealed for today, the appearance of this extremely interesting author in Georgian hymnography must have been associated with the name of Ephrem Mtsire. Thus, the Parisian manuscript – Georgica 5 gives an opportunity of restoration more than one specimen of Byzantine hymnography.

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